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[LANCASHIRE WORTHIES.]

THE FOUNDER OF THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL.

READERS of De Quincey's early autobiography may remember a mention there of Dr. Thomas Percival, the founder of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, now in the ninetieth year of its age. At the time to which he refers, the English Opium-eater was a little boy, living with his widowed mother at Greenheys, from which, he says, he had nothing but "a solitary road to traverse" all the way to "Princess Street, then the termination, on that side, of Manchester!" Speaking of a story which made a deep impression on the juvenile minds of himself and his sister, De Quincey thus rambles on in his own peculiar and discursive fashion. "From what quarter the story comes originally was unknown to us at the time, and I have never met it since; so that, possibly, it may be new to the reader. We found it in a book written for the use of his own children, by Dr. Percival, the physician who attended at Greenhay," which, according to De Quincey, was the name of his mother's mansion, built not long before, as a country house, by his father, and from which, he avers, our well-known suburb of Greenheys derived its name. "Dr. P.," continues De Quincey, diverging into episodical reminiscence, "was a literary man, of elegant tastes and philosophic habits. Some of his papers may be found in the *Manchester Philosophic Transactions*, and these I have heard mentioned with respect, though, for myself, I have no personal knowledge of them. Some presumption meantime arises in their favour, from the fact that he had been a favoured correspondent of the most eminent Frenchmen at that time who cultivated literature, jointly with philosophy. Voltaire, Diderot, Maupertius, Condorcet, and D'Alembert had all treated him with distinction; and I have heard my mother say that in days before I or my sister could have known him, he attempted vainly to interest her in these French luminaries by reading extracts from their frequent letters; which, however, so far from reconciling her to the letters, or to the writers of the letters, had the unhappy effect of riveting the dislike (previously budding) to the doctor as their receiver, and to their authors. The tone of the letters—hollow, insincere, and full of courtly civilities to Dr. P. as a known friend of 'the tolerance' (meaning, of course, of toleration)—certainly was not adapted to the English taste; and in this respect was specially offensive to my mother, as always assuming of the doctor, that by mere necessity, as being a philosopher, he must be an infidel. Dr. P. left that question, I believe, *in medio*, neither assenting nor denying; and undoubtedly there was no particular call upon him to publish his Confession of Faith before one who in the midst of her rigorous politeness suffered it to be too transparent that she did not like him. It is always a pity to see anything lost and wasted, especially love; and therefore, it was no subject for lamentation that too probably the philosophic doctor did not enthusiastically like *her*. But if really so, that made no difference in his feelings towards my sister and myself. Us he *did* like; and as one proof of his regard, he presented us jointly with such of his works as could be supposed interesting to two young literati, whose combined ages made no more at this period than a baker's dozen. These presentation copies amounted to two at the least, both octavos, and one of them entitled *The Father's*—something or other; what was it? *Assistant* perhaps." No, the book which Dr. Percival gave some eighty years ago to the little De Quinceys must have been his once well-known work, *A Father's Instructions*, partly original, partly selected. In the present day, to designate this Lancashire worthy, as we have found him designated in his own, "the illustrious Percival," would be exaggeration. Yet, his worth and his merit, his services to Manchester were by no means small, and he ought not to be remembered only by the indifferent likeness of him, as of a tedious and conceited free-thinking bore, preserved in De Quincey's autobiography.

Thomas Percival was born at Warrington, in 1740. He came of a Cheshire stock, and his ancestors long cultivated in that county what his son grandly calls "the patrimonial estate," though, on further definition, this turns out to have been nothing more than "a farm of moderate extent." His grandfather Peter was the first of the family to quit the Cheshire homestead, and to fix his residence at Warrington, where he practised physic. Peter's eldest son, Thomas, followed his father's profession in his father's adopted town (he had been a pupil of Boerhaave), but a love of learned ease contracted the sphere of his professional exertions. The father of the founder of our Literary and Philosophical Institution was a third son of Peter's, and seems to have shared the disposition of his brother the physician. "Averse," we are told, "from the pursuit of fame and fortune, he appears to have sought his happiness in the tranquil enjoyment of an easy and respectable station." Thomas, the youngest surviving son, had lost both father and mother when he was a child of three, and his upbringing devolved on an elder sister, a superior as well as affectionate woman. She had him properly grounded, and then sent to the Free Grammar School of Warrington, where he distinguished himself by his ability and industry. When he was ten an uncle died, leaving the clever little boy a small competency wherewith to obtain a liberal education, and to follow any profession for which he had a fancy. The fame of his physician-uncle was cherished in the family, and the studious nephew seems soon to have resolved to become a medical man.

Percival was seventeen, and had learned all that could be learned in the Free Grammar School of his native town, just about the time of the establishment of the once-celebrated Warrington Academy, still faintly remembered as having had Priestley and Gilbert Wakefield among its teachers. It was founded partly to give a solid and useful education to the youth of the Northern Counties, but above all to furnish candidates for the Dissenting Ministry with the freer theological instruction thought needful at a time when English Presbyterianism was being transformed into Unitarianism. Percival's "family" had ere this left the church, and he is said to have been the first student enrolled by the Warrington Academy when it opened its doors in 1757. The teaching of the Academy was not of a kind to lead the enquiring youth of seventeen back to the Anglican Church. He had cherished a desire to complete his studies at the University of Oxford, but before he could enter it a strict theological subscription was necessary. Percival looked into the matter with diligence and earnestness, and found that he could not conscientiously sign the thirty-nine articles. When this conclusion had been deliberately arrived at, he gave up his Oxford aspirations, and proceeded to the University of Edinburgh, there to study medicine. At Edinburgh he resided in the house of a sister of Robertson the historian, a Mrs. Syme, who in point of fact did neither more nor less than take boarders. In her house and otherwise he was thrown among the best literary and scientific society of the Scottish capital; Robertson and David Hume were among his intimate acquaintances. His relations with Robertson survived his departure from the Modern Athens. Years afterwards it was from Robertson, as Principal of Edinburgh University, that the friendly intervention of Percival obtained their Doctors' degrees for Priestly, Aikin, Enfield (of *The Speaker*) and other tutors of the Warrington Academy.

In the midst of his Edinburgh studies, Percival stole a year's holiday, spending it in London and the scientific circles of the great metropolis. There and then he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, through the influence of Hugh, Lord Willoughby, of Parham, the representative of a peerage now extinct, a promoter of the Warrington Academy, who was not ashamed to remain a "Protestant Dissenter," as his fathers had been before him, though in days, indeed, before English Presbyterianism had began to develop into Arian Priestleyanism. On finally leaving Edinburgh, Percival made a tour on the continent, and having completed his medical studies at Leyden, he took his degree there in 1765. Returning to Warrington, he married, and remained in his native town for a couple of years, contributing medical and scientific papers to the transactions of the Royal Society, and to suitable periodicals. Learned in all the medical lore of his time, Percival now looked forward to establishing himself in London as a physician. He thought,

however, that meanwhile it would be desirable to acquire some preliminary experience and reputation. In 1767, accordingly, he came to Manchester, and he never left it.

With such professional knowledge and skill, such culture and manners as his, Percival soon took the highest position among the physicians of Manchester. Beyond the limits of Lancashire, too, his name was made known to the profession everywhere, and to the general scientific world, by three volumes of *Essays Medical and Experimental*, the last of which was published in 1776. The year before this appeared ("dedicated to the Countess of Stamford") the first of three parts (the concluding one was not published until 1800) of *A Father's Instructor*, the book which de Quincy has referred to. But it is by the zeal with which he devoted himself to promoting in every way the improvement of the town of his adoption that Percival deserves to be held in remembrance among us. He came to Manchester, as already said, in 1767, by which time Hargreaves had perfected his spinning jenny, and this just on the eve of that great expansion of the cotton manufacture which has converted what was in 1767 a second-rate country town into one of the greatest cities in the empire. Seven years later, Percival was able to note "the rapid growth of Manchester and Salford," the population of which had increased from some 20,000 in 1757 to some 27,000 in 1773, and in those quiet old days this was considered, and rightly considered, a wonderful phenomenon. Even with this trifling increase new sanitary needs had arisen, and it was clear to Percival that population statistics were required as the basis of improvement. Accordingly, in 1773, there appeared his "proposals for establishing more accurate and comprehensive Bills of Mortality in Manchester," proposals which may raise a smile in these days of general figuring when, not to speak of registrars-general and decennial censuses, our city has a Statistical Society all to itself, but which was full then of novelty and originality. Historically, these disquisitions of Percival's are full of information most interesting still, and their practical importance was so obvious as to excite the attentionof Benjamin Franklin, who, by correspondence, highly approved and sought to stimulate the statistical zeal of the Manchester physician. From Percival'sdata, it appears, we shall only add, that so late as 1788 the population of Manchester and Salford was a mere 50,000. Eight years afterwards, however, when the inventions which made modern cotton-spinning what it is, when Hargreaves's spinning-jenny, Crompton's mule, and Arkwright's water-frame, had fairly developed their productiveness, Manchester was, for those days, a great manufacturing town. Increased wages produced dissolute living among an uneducated population, which spent its earnings in a way not conducive to well-being and to health. The constant supply of labour from the country districts concealed the ravages caused by avoidable disease, until at last contagious diseases broke out, which spared the rich as little as the poor, and then, indeed, the instinct of self-preservation roused the upper classes of Manchester from their lethargy to exertion. Public meetings were held; a local committee was appointed to institute enquiries, to suggest remedies, and to enforce them in conjunction with the authorities. This committee became in reality, as in name, a board of health, chiefly by the strenuous appeal made to it by Percival. In a document which is still extant, he called on the board and the authorities to compel ventilation and cleanliness in the dwellings of the poor; to establish both special feverwards and a house of recovery (our modern convalescent hospital); to have the cotton-factories inspected, and to procure returns of the condition, ages, hours of work, and so forth of those employed in them, more particulary of the parish apprentices; to limit the number and to regulate the internal economy of common lodging-houses; to establish what he called "caravanseries" for the reception of those who came to Manchester, unknown and unrecommended, in quest of employment; and last, not least, he insisted on the establishment of public baths. The most important of our modern sanitary, and some of the most important of our modern social, reforms were anticipated in the statement of the measures with which Percival energetically and not unsuccessfully urged the Manchester of 1796 to repress the diseases ravaging its population.

For his efforts to forward the higher education of Manchester, as well as to improve the physical and sanitary condition of its working classes, a certain debt of gratitude is also due to Percival. He was in the habit of holding at his own house weekly meetings for conversation on any topic which was not frivolous. These were attended by his own friends, in whom the principal inhabitants of the town were included, and by occasional strangers. Singular as it may seem, Manchester in those days had visitors, who came not only to inspect the manufacturing marvels of the place, but for purposes of classical study. One educational establishment of the kind (that of the Rev. Ralph Harrison) was so famous, that for its sake the Marquis of Waterford of the time sent to Manchester two of his sons, accompanied by their tutor, Charles De Polier, a cultivated Swiss, of whom there is an affectionate record from Percival's pen in an early volume of the *Transactions of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society*. It was from these weekly meetings at Percival's house that this Society took its rise. As the gatherings became larger and more interesting, the place of meeting was removed to a tavern; a few rules were drawn up; and, at last in 1781, the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester was formally instituted. Among the first members were Dr. Darwin, Priestley, Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, Wedgwood, and two ever-memorable foreigners Monsieur Lavoisier, "the Newton of modern chemistry" (as he is styled in the original list), and "Mr. Alexander Volta, professor of experimental philosophy at Como"—the inventor of the Voltaic pile. Percival was one of the first two joint-presidents, and on the death of his colleague he became sole president of the society, which, in the days of Joule and Angus Smith, worthily preserves the European reputation which it gained in those of Dalton and of Henry. When the first publication of its memoirs was made, Percival wrote to Pitt, then prime minister, to ask leave to dedicate them to George III., and in 1785 they appeared with a dedication, of which the opening words were, "To the King"—an exordium more impressive then than now.

In his attempts to establish in Manchester two other institutions Percival was not so successful, though the second of them at least deserves grateful recognition. The earliest was made in 1785, when his *alma mater* as it were, the Warrington Academy, was clearly, and from various easily understood causes, on its last legs. In combination with "Protestant Dissenters" here and elsewhere, Percival succeeded in founding an institution of the same kind in Manchester, which will always be remembered from the circumstance that during six years John Dalton was its "tutor in mathematics and natural philosophy." Like its Warrington predecessor, however, it did not permanently flourish. By 1802 it had fallen into a deep decline, for which change of air was prescribed, and it migrated to York. The second institution which Percival and his friends also managed to found in our city, but which enjoyed only a very brief existence, was a sort of Manchester University, intended for young men who, having finished their ordinary education, were about to "go into business." They were to attend lectures on mathematics, chemistry, the fine arts, and so forth, but above all, on commerce. "After two winters, however, of unfavourable trial the undertaking was found to decline, and was at length reluctantly abandoned." "The voluntary principle proved to be insufficient." The munificence of an Owen was needed to establish a suitable Manchester University.

Thomas Percival died at Manchester on the 30th of August, 1804, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. A Latin epitaph by the mighty Doctor Parr is inscribed in the church at Warrington, his native place, where he was buried; and over the president's chair in the hall of the Manchester Philosophical and Literary Society, a mural tablet was erected to his memory. Though Percival is not commemorated in the trivial, vulgar, slovenly *Book about Doctors* of Mr. J. C. Jeafferson, he ought to figure prominently in that competent account of Engiish Medical Biography, the continued absence of which from our literature is far from creditable to the profession. Even as things are Percival has not been consigned to total professional oblivion. So late as 1849, his excellent little work on *Medical Ethics* was re-published and re-edited by the well-known Dr. Greenhill, of Oxford, who in his preface declared it to be "commonly quoted as a work of authority not only in this country but also in America." His merits as a public-spirited denizen of Manchester, always foremost to promote the varied social interests of the town of his adoption, we have done our best to exhibit in the limits to which we are confined.

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THE MANCHESTER ARTISTS' EXHIBITION.

THE late exhibition of pictures by members of the Manchester Academy of Art has proved, as we anticipated, by far the most successful yet held. Nineteen works only were sold last year, producing £172; this year no fewer than forty-four works were disposed of, and the aggregate sum received amounted to £425. The sales were as follows :—

		£	s.	d.
The Basilica at Rome ..	H. C. Whaite	52	10	0
Conway Marshes	ditto	12	12	0
At the Mouth of the Conway	ditto	12	12	0
A Capri Cornfield	W. Bright Morris	52	10	0
Capri Girl	ditto	21	0	0
The Sacristy	ditto	10	10	0
An Old Pergola	ditto	8	8	0
Rome: Wet Evening ..	ditto	5	5	0
Salzburg Alps	W. H. W. Heys	25	0	0
Caub on the Rhine	ditto	15	15	0
Rennage on the Rhine ..	ditto	15	15	0
Lorach Abbey	ditto	5	5	0
On the Moselle	ditto	5	5	0
Hoffmann's House, Bacarach	ditto	4	4	0
Ehrenbreitstein	ditto	2	2	0
Peaceful Slumbers	W. Robinson	20	0	0
Academy Study	ditto	2	0	0
Coast Scene	Richard Redfern	15	15	0
Cornfield	ditto	10	10	0
Tantallon Castle	ditto	0	10	0
North Berwick	ditto	8	8	0
April	ditto	4	4	0
A Welsh Highway	R. G. Somerset	10	10	0
A Windy Corner	ditto	3	3	0
Study near Conway	ditto	3	3	0
Fruit Piece	Anderson Hague	10	10	0
Study of Boy's Head ..	ditto	5	5	0
A Fusee Lad	ditto	3	3	0
The Moon Shines Bright	Fred. A. Winkfield	12	12	0
Cornish Brook	ditto	4	4	0
Study at Dolgelly	W. Artingstall	6	6	0
Coast of Antrim	James Bagot	8	8	0
The Setting Sun's Last Ray	H. H. Hadfield	5	5	0
On the Irwell	ditto	5	5	0
Moorland Pastures	William Morton	5	0	0
Leaving Glossop	ditto	2	2	0
On the West Coast	J. Adshead	3	3	0
Primary Education	J. H. E. Partington	3	3	0
A Waif	ditto	3	3	0
Dozing	ditto	2	2	0
Sinbad under Snow	George Hayes	2	2	0
Conway	ditto	2	2	0
Trefrw	ditto	1	11	6
Cornfield	J. H. Hague	2	10	0
	Total	425	2	6

As in previous years, several works, including those by Mr. Joseph Knight, and several, if not all those by Mr. George Sheffield—two of the largest exhibitors—were not on sale. On the whole, the pecuniary result is most remarkable, and proportionately is far superior to the two last annual exhibitions of the Royal Institution. A letter appeared in our last issue on the subject of the Manchester Academy of Art and our art critiques generally. We deem it only just to ourselves to state that there is no foundation whatever for an insinuation which it contained. No artist has ever been permitted to "lavish praise" on his own works in the columns of this journal.

THE FIELD NATURALISTS.

THE Field Naturalists have finished their winter season, and are preparing for their out-door campaign. The transition, as usual, is signalized by the appearance of their annual report. Rightly or wrongly, we think we discern in this document an apologetic tone and a gentle insinuation that everybody concerned has reason to be satisfied. In this the report only does its duty, as it is the object of all reports to make matters look their very best. The accomplished secretary's long acquaintance with flowers and the other elegant forms of the vegetable kingdom has gifted him with the power of importing something of their symmetry and finished proportions into the sentences which flow from his pen. The report, however, does not materially modify our estimate of what the Society has latterly been doing, Though we observe, for instance, that several addresses were delivered after the excursions ; yet on counting the number we find that there were only four to the eleven trips, and that out of those four two were given by the secretary. Of course we know that Mr. Grindon's remarks are always well worth hearing, at least when he confines himself to the botanical world ; but we deferentially submit that although the society does not propose "to itself or to new-comers, or to its friends or the public, to enter upon paths of absolutely new scientific enquiry"—we quote from the report—yet a society which is continually educating ladies and gentlemen, so that to them "things that were mute become voiceful," and "weeds become flowers," should at least out of its strength occasionally bring to the front less familiar names than those of Mr. Catton, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Grindon. We do not wish the society to degenerate into a mere essay and discussion class ; but it exists because it says there is more pleasure in seeing intelligently than with uncomprehending eyes, and the opportunity afforded, while resting after tea, of conveying interesting explanation and pleasant knowledge is too agreeable to be lost by a society of true lovers of nature.

We are glad to find from the report that at least one improvement has been made in the composition of the executive by the addition of the name of Mr. John Angell. Mr. Angell possesses both ability, energy, and scientific knowledge, and if he brings all these qualities to bear upon the coming excursions the inquiring members of the society will find him to be a valuable acquisition.

Our hopes for the coming season, however, are not founded upon the report, though that promises something. It is to the soirée of last week that we must attribute the renewed interest which the society has awakened within us. On that occasion we were most pleasantly surprised. The gathering exhibited such a degree of animation, and the faces present were enlivened by such unmistakable expressions of enjoyment, that we unconsciously caught the general spirit, and found ourselves becoming less bored every moment. We were inclined to suppose that the fact of the soirée taking place on the evening of the day on which the royal marriage was celebrated, had something to do with the matter, and this idea was strengthened by the three times three with which the company recognised that auspicious event. We soon found, however, that our thanks were due to the executive, who had evidently—to use a boating phrase—been making a spurt. The object of the society, after all, is to increase the pleasures of its members; only its founders had the right idea of doing this by seeking to enlarge the scope of the truest, highest, and most enduring faculty of pleasure—the mind. The presence of music was, therefore, quite legitimate, and materially added to the enjoyment. Miss Johnson, a true artist, performed a very pleasing selection on the pianoforte. We were not predisposed to think favourably of music by machinery, but were compelled to admit that a certain box also, which seemed to be alive, discoursed sweet sounds. As for the objects on the tables, the collection was very similar to previous ones. But there were positively several gentlemen present who did not scruple to explain their nature and enter into conversation about them with individuals whose names and faces even were unknown to the explainers. Moreover, the presence of several of the old members lent, in the words of Jeames, "eclaw to the scene." Lastly, the lecture was a most interesting and useful one ; and the lecturer spoke so that all could hear. Though the society does not profess to follow new paths of inquiry we don't see why it should not do so. The science it only undertakes to dabble in is of that rare kind which enables the student to combine healthful exercise with study, without at the same time in the smallest degree detracting from his recreation. On the contrary, it is in the nature of the thing that the more the man knows the more will he enjoy himself in every way, and the more pleasure will he give to others. Mr. Alcock's paper, "Trees and Plants in the vicinity of Towns," was a valuable contribution to general knowledge, and contained information of great practical utility. Also the chairman's supplementary address was not a string of commonplaces, but an interesting detail of additional facts, making the whole affair look as if it were really in earnest. A charge brought by the secretary against somebody at Didsbury deserves to be chronicled here. It appears that near that place grew one of the finest trees in the neighbourhood of Manchester, a noble sycamore. The

poor thing had contracted a habit of scattering leaves over the lawn belonging to the gentleman in whose grounds it grew; that individual had therefore cut it down and cast it into the fire. The barbarity needs no comment from us. In a fit of botanical indignation Mr. Grindon denounced tree murder as worse than baby-murder. The ladies present did *not* raise any outcry.

We sincerely and cordially hope the Field Naturalists' Society will increase in true strength and usefulness during the coming season. The glimpses of summer which we have lately enjoyed recalled to our thoughts many a pleasant ramble with some who could give even trees and flowers new beauty. Many people are afraid of botanical science. They think it is something dry and hard and dull. Even such a man as George Macdonald could say that the botanist would tear a primrose shred from shred and explain all its various parts, and that then the poet would reply "yes—but where's my primrose?" There is a beauty in the forms and colours of things because it is the primary nature of the universe to be beautiful; and unlearned eyes can see such beauty. But there is a higher beauty than this even, in the life and aspirations, and we had almost said *thoughts* of plants, which the botanist alone can see.

VON BISMARK'S TREATY.

VON BISMARK shtart a dreaty;
"Sing pully for Vaterland!
Joost dake your ben, my French envoy,
Ve'll shcribble it out off-hand.
Und ve'll alter dis map of Europe,
For dese Kaisers of yours und mine,
Und ve'll pot a few of de redail sort,
Und settle der river Rhine."

Von Bismark shtart a dreaty;
He vinks dree times mit fun
"Und it's pully, my French tiplomadist,
I shmokes dill you haf tone.
Joost put in apout der Luxembourg,
Mit Belgium by der way,
Und vot ever else dat shdrikes you as coot,
I hopes you dere vill say."

Von Bismark shtart a dreaty;
Der vas sausage und goot Rhine vine,
Und dey shmoked, und schwigged, und eat, und shvore
"Dis dreaty—tam, 'tis fine!"
Und Benedetti he saidt—"Mon Tieu!
How I likes dis brecious shbree."
Und he dhanks Von Bismark dwenty dimes
For efery new idee.

Von Bismark shtart a dreaty—
He took der traft to hide
Mit his love-ledders und his boetry
Und a dhing or dwo peside.
Den he ask Kaiser Vilhelm to shlogg his kop
Und say "Joost you comes no more."
Von Bismark he shoot up his knasterbouch
Und locked oop his cellar door.

Von Bismark shtart a dreaty.
So long ash I ton't can dell;
Der has peen der Teufel to pay since dhen,
Der fery Teufel in hell!
Und Gount Von Bismark haf alter de map,
Und pegged oop a vinning schore,
Und I dinks de poys dat he played mit
Tont vant him do blay no more.

Von Bismark shtart a dreaty.
Vhere is dat dreaty vlied?
Bei gooms!—Is it cone to plazes
Mit dwo or dree more peside?
Vhere is dat Benedetti cone?
Vhere is dat bummer's master?
All busted opp—mit der red Rhine vine,
Der sausages und k'naster.

Berlin, April 1st, 1871.

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

MR. TOOLE AT THE ROYAL: A FORTNIGHT'S PAY.

AFTER the dispensation of liquor, the dispensation of amusement would appear to be the most profitable of commercial undertakings—at least, to the successful few. Our readers may or may not be aware that Mr. Toole, deserting for the nonce our Prince's Theatre, is shortly to appear at our Theatre Royal. A small controversy has been going on between the *Liverpool Courier* and the Liverpool *Porcupine*—which both take a great interest in things theatrical—about the terms on which Mr. Toole has been engaged. It has been proved by incontrovertible evidence that the terms for twelve nights' work are £600 and a benefit. Judging by Mr. Toole and Mr. Sothern, the remuneration of dramatic triumph seems to waiver about £50 a night. As these artists constantly appear in pieces they have played a hundred or a thousand times, the pay is too much—mischievously too much—as it gives a spurious lustre to the actor independent of his art: but we may be sure it is the market price, since Mr. Knowles has given it; and when beersellers and stockbrokers clear such enormous profits for doing next to nothing, it is hardly matter for regret that actors can occasionally do the same. It is impossible to eliminate luck from the fortunes of humanity, so we should rather be thankful when it falls in channels not altogether unworthy of it.

HENRY LIVERSEEGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—Will you permit me to add a few supplementary words to the interesting biographical sketch of Liverseege which appeared in your last number? Shortly after the artist's death, the whole of his pictures were engraved and published, in a serial form, by Messrs. Hodgson, Boys, and Graves, London, and Messrs. Grundy and Goadsby, Manchester. A complete copy of the book which the engravings form is before me. It is, however, very difficult to procure. It seems rather strange that the engravings have not been reissued, as, doubtless, many admirers of Liverseege would be found, even at the present day, who would be glad to possess the engravings from his charming paintings.—Yours obediently, A READER.

SURGEONS V. CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS.

Taking advantage of a case of accidental poisoning in a surgeon's family, sundry chemists have been descanting on the trade unfairness of medical men making up their own prescriptions. Dispensing, they urge, is the trade of a chemist and druggist, not of a professional man. The modern chemist to a certain extent has supplanted the old apothecary, and the apothecary of the present day is perforce a perfectly educated doctor. Theoretically, it would be much better for medical men to abjure dispensing, but practically it would amount, in an ordinary second-class practice, to a second charge to the patient of at least one half more. Clubs could not exist—perhaps as they now stand not an unmixed loss—and the independent poor could not avail themselves of a qualified medical man at all. In a first-class practice it is the invariable rule not to dispense, but for the sake of the poor we hope medical men will long exercise their undoubted rights as to the compounding their own prescriptions. There is another side to the picture which these *ne sutor ultra crepidam* people will not care to let the public see. Except a few of our best firms, chemists have assumed the functions belonging by law only to legally qualified medical men. This abuse of their position has more to do with our heavy death-rate than most people are aware of. Chemists are answerable for the majority of the deaths among the children of the labouring classes. If chemists really want a reform, why do not they begin at home? Let them take down all their misleading signs, and burn all their equivocal labels. So bold have these pseudo-doctors become that they even sign the authorized forms of certificates of death, generally styling themselves "medical chemists." We were at a hospital the other day, and we saw several specimens of men who had either been lamed or had their constitutions lamed for life by chemists; and the surgeon for the week assured us these were common occurrences. We enquired what had been paid to these quacks, and their names. The "fee" was in all cases larger than would have been asked by a qualified man, and the ruin wrought was truly frightful. A

darker page still against chemists could be unfolded, but it is unfitted for promiscuous ears. This picture is rather under than over-drawn. Mr. Leigh, our Medical Officer of Health, was for some years a registrar of births and deaths. It would be interesting and instructive were he to tell us how many certificates he received, written or verbal, from the prescribing chemists of his district. In some districts it is self-evident that the quasi illegal use of certificates is a matter of bargain between parties other than the chemists. Surely the Registrar-General ought to put a stop to this irregularity.

THE ATHENÆUM MUSICAL SOCIETY.

The third and final concert of the present season was given last Friday evening. The hall, though perhaps the most uncomfortable room both for singers and hearers in Manchester, was crowded to excess; a fact which speaks well for the vitality of both the Society and the Athenæum. The programme was divided into two parts, the first sacred, and the second secular. All the concerted music was well performed in both parts. The choir shows a perfection in reading, in correctness of time, in truth of pitch, and in vigour of attack, which does credit alike to the talents of the members and to the training of Dr. Hiles, their conductor. It was noticeable that the first part of the programme was less perfect in execution than the second, and showed errors of style which did not appear in the latter—this particularly as to strength of voice, which was overdone, and as to proper distinction in light and shade, which was nearly ignored. It would scarcely be possible to point out a fault in the execution of the second part of the programme of concerted music, and yet it would not be proper to omit mention of Macfarren's *Robin Goodfellow*, Morley's *Fire, fire, my heart*, and the old English madrigal, *The May*, as instances of exceptional excellence. Several solos were sung during the evening with considerable taste and executive power. We venture to think that if this Society would confine itself to secular music, and avoid solos, it would be second to none. Its four-part songs and madrigals scarcely leave anything to be desired.

A RARE BIRD NEAR MANCHESTER.

A few days ago a fine specimen of the Butcher-Bird (*Lanius Excubitor*), or Great Grey Shrike, was shot at Flixton by Mr. Falkner, and has been set up by Mr. Harrop, of this city. It is a somewhat rare visitor to this locality. In the south of England, more especially in Kent, it is not so uncommon. It derives its English name from its amiable habit of impaling its victims, which consist of frogs, mice, shrews, lizards, large insects, and young birds, upon a thorn, and pulling them to pieces. It exceeds the hawk in cruelty and voracity. In some localities it is called the Murdering Pie. Selby says that they are capable of being tamed, and that one that he had seen "had learned to sing several bars of airs with a full musical voice. It executed the first part of *Over the Water to Charlie* with a spirit that would have gone to the heart of an old Jacobite." The practice of potting every rare bird that can be got at is much to be regretted, but in the present instance the villanous character of the victim somewhat reduces our sympathy for its fate.

BRIDGE STREET FAVOURITISM.

There must be some radical alteration in the way affairs are managed at the Police Court. If there is one thing more firmly established than another, it is that the proceedings in our courts shall be public. To criminal proceedings this salutary regulation especially applies. It is true that in certain cases the bench has a discretion as to whether certain matters shall be heard in open court, but so delicate a function ought not to be exercised by the haphazard tribunal of Bridge Street. It appears to us that the option could not possibly have been worse exercised than in the case of the mysterious young ladies "of prepossessing appearance," whose examinations in the baby-farming case were had in private, or at least whose names were carefully concealed. Baby-farming is a crime in which the principals are not the active agents who are placed in the dock, but the young ladies "of prepossessing appearance" who are called as witnesses for the prosecution. To divert the proceedings of a public court from their ordinary course out of consideration for the feeling of such persons as these is little less than to be accessory to their crime, and that the Bridge Street bench should have done such a thing shows an incapacity to understand the gravity of the situation. The way "ladies" and "gentlemen" are treated when they render themselves amenable to the processes of law is a discredit to the country. It is the merest mockery to pretend that there is only one law for the rich and for the poor; at least, there is one for plain young women, and another for young "ladies" of prepossessing appearance.

FOOTBALL.

YORKSHIRE v. LANCASHIRE.

YORKSHIRE.—Messrs. C. Beardsell, H. Beardsell, Bradley, Butler, G. S. Brook, H. S. Brook, Champion, Freeman, Firth, Gibson, Griesback, Heron, Hodgson, Holmes, Hurst, Lasson, M'Laurin, Naylor, Wade, and Wright.

LANCASHIRE.—Messrs. Armitage, Calley, Grave, A. S. Gibson, P. M'D. Gibson, Hay-Gordon, Hermon, Hulton, J. R. Kewley, E. Kewley, Lemonius, W. Maclaren, D. Maclaren, M'Intosh, Moore, Osborne, Penny, Taylor, Turner, Welsh.

THE increasing popularity of Football is beyond question. At no cricket match that we remember in this neighbourhood have we seen so large an assembly as mustered at Whalley Range, last Saturday, to witness a glorious fight at football between the chosen players of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The numbers were so large that the precaution which had been taken to rope round the field of battle was not thrown away. The game is so simple in its main features that all can understand it, and in consequence it has the power of exciting the spectators and rousing them to any height of frantic enthusiasm. It was something to hear the roar that went round the field when a point was scored, or at a specially plucky or clever piece of play. Local antagonism existed vigorously amongst the onlookers. Yorkshire sympathizers were numerous, not a little noisy, and at one point of the game unpleasantly triumphant. The undisguised joy of those ladies interested in the success of Yorkshire was specially hard to bear for those who were longing for the triumph of the home players.

The Lancashire players were selected from various places in the county. Eight of the twenty were chosen from Manchester, as many came from Liverpool, and, in addition, there were representatives of Rochdale and Preston. Players from Leeds, Bradford, Hull, and Huddersfield fought for Yorkshire. It is by no means uncommon for equally matched teams to struggle all afternoon and for neither side to gain any particular advantage, but it is unusual under such circumstances to secure a great gain in the first few minutes. Yet on Saturday, in less than a quarter of an hour, by some unhappy fatality, before the men had properly warmed to their work Yorkshire had scored a goal. Of course every possible attempt was made by sympathetic Lancastrians to ascribe as much as possible of this success to ill-luck. But however the fact may have arisen it was quite unalterable, and not all the exertions of the chosen of Lancashire sufficed to wipe out or counterbalance this inauspicious commencement. We are not going to attempt anything like a consecutive chronicle of all the incidents of the hard fought battle which followed. None would venture to question that for the remainder of the game Lancashire played admirably. The individual pluck and prowess of the players were beyond criticism. Such favourites as Osborne, Grave, and Maclaren, and other Manchester men, as usual, excited frantic approbation, and many of the representatives of other towns, though personally less known to most of the lookers-on, covered themselves with glory, whilst all the men worked admirably together. We must not be understood to suggest that the Yorkshire players did not also distinguish themselves In the face of the victory, which to the end remained theirs, such argument would be absurd. Individually their play was excellent, but they appeared to fail somewhat in their combined action. To that cause it was chiefly due that, after the first terrible blow, the game was decidedly in favour of Lancashire. Again and again was the ball forced beyond the Yorkshire goal, and three times was it touched down by Lancashire players. Once it seemed as if Lancashire were about to balance the state of the game. From the centre of a scrimmage the ball was so kicked that it came steadily soaring towards the goal. The spectators held their breath to watch its slow flight, too excited almost to shout. But the ball is a little too low. It passes between the perpendicular bars, indeed, but under instead of over the horizontal bar. It is "touched down," sent into the middle of the field, to become again the centre of a fierce fight.

With the important exception we have noticed, very much of the fighting seemed to take place in the vicinity of the boundary line on the Yorkshire end of the field. Yet all the exertions of the Lancashire men did not avail them in winning a goal, and as the bell rang at five o'clock the victory still remained with the strangers. At the close of the game a Yorkshire player who had especially distinguished himself was seized, mounted on the shoulders of his comrades and borne in triumphant discomfort to the pavilion. During the latter half of the play the sultry heat of the early afternoon was succeeded by a violent downpour of rain which had no other effect on the players than to refresh them for further exertions. Neither the rain nor the hard work seemed to have had an unpleasing influence on them as they stood about perspiring, panting, and bare-headed. Surrounding them was a crowd of admiring friends. One gentleman had an apparently unlimited supply of lemons, which he distributed impartially, and *ad libitum*, in slices, with the comforting assurance that "Lemon is the best thing in the world. Make you fit for another game right off." It is to be hoped that he had not unconsciously exaggerated the value of that particularly disagreeable edible.

VOLUNTEERING.

THE NEW DISPENSATION.

TWELVE years of marching and countermarching, of wet parades and moist shooting days, finds us with the volunteer force still in our midst, and those who made themselves prominent by prognosticating a year's duration to the "folly" of amateur soldiering, have been compelled to admit that the martial spirit still lives in the breasts of a portion of England's sons. The term a "a portion" is used advisedly; for, take away the inducement of "pot hunting" from the "professional" shot, and that gentleman's place in the ranks would know him no more; and for him if there were no prizes there would be no parades. In every corps, too, may be found a few men for whom the only attraction is a suit of fine clothes, to be worn on high military holidays. The steady-going, earnest volunteer is the one who is mindful of his duty, as a duty; who turns up at his company drill although there are none to see him but his instructor; who attends his Saturday's parades when the days are wet; and who will never have it said that his corps musters badly through his absence.

The Volunteer of the Period is a different personage altogether, and can be easily distinguished from the model rifleman. He has generally plenty of money to enable him to indulge in certain things which render him conspicuous. When he should march back from exercise in the ranks he betakes himself to the top of an omnibus. His leggings are never of the regulation pattern. He must have a short rifle and a sword, whilst his comrades carry the long Snider and the bayonet. If possible he will be on terms of familiarity with his captain to the detriment of all discipline; and outside his own corps he affects the company of "the line," and shows a fine contempt for the militia. Indeed the company of a "regular" sergeant is, in his eyes, equal to acquaintance with a commissioned officer of the second service. A step in promotion is an event in his life. The lance-corporal's stripe is the badge and symbol of authority which he would be glad to exercise, were his knowledge of his duties equal to his aspirations. A little more promotion makes him a sergeant. Then he becomes anxious for the colour badge, and the holder of that position is voted a bore and a muff at his drill, in the vain hope that he will resign and leave open the rank to our hero. A little longer and the sergeant's stripes are not sufficient for his vanity. He would carry a sword, and makes interest for some honorary and (in the regular service) unknown post. His cross-belt must be like an officer's; his cap ditto. His stripes become a burden, and are lowered down to his cuffs that he may be mistaken for his sergeant-major. He invents an undress uniform—to be worn on shooting days—as nearly like an officer's as can be; and in time he tires of this, and not having the means or the spirit to buy a commission, or the brains to hold one, he retires dissatisfied from the force, and ever after sneers at a service to which he was no credit and which is well rid of a bad bargain.

This is no overdrawn picture. Many young men can be pointed to who have for a short period been enrolled volunteers, and who have restlessly shifted from one rank to another, their ambition never satisfied, until at last they have retired. If the disappointment and vexation had been theirs only no harm would have been done; but the favouritism which has been shown to them has acted prejudicially in other cases, and created no end of dissatisfaction, leading to the retirement of good men who otherwise would have been a credit to the force.

For this state of things the officers have alone been responsible. Undisciplined themselves, they could not insist upon discipline in others; and, utterly without a knowledge of drill, they were unable to correct the mistakes of the rank and file. Here and there an officer might be found who would shoulder his rifle, take his place in the ranks, and drill as a private, but he was an exception. When a gentleman joins the regular service, he is obliged to go through a course of drill similar to that of the humblest recruit; but in the volunteer force, for a long time, the only qualification for a command that was apparently deemed necessary was a visit to the regimental tailor. The new officer would then appear on parade; one of his sergeants would tell him what to do; and by-and-bye he would be able to halt his company within a few seconds more or less of the proper time, would know his place in a column of fours, and would with hard struggling prove his company by sections and in fours. All this is changed or changing. Within the past six months a reaction has set in in favour of efficiency. An officer will in future be esteemed less for being a "good sort" than for "knowing his work," and, without knowing it, the officers themselves have been the instrument through which this revolution has been brought about.

After having gone through the course of recruit or preliminary drills, it is in the power of every volunteer to earn twenty shillings of capitation allowance for his corps by attendance at a very limited number of drills and parades—ten in all; and facilities are afforded him of getting an extra ten shillings by attaining to a certain standard of efficiency in shooting. In this particular two of the Manchester corps have for several years held a high position—their earnings being within a copper or two of the thirty shillings. But not so with all; the magnificent sum of 3½d. per man has been gained by one corps in England, whilst, with the majority of the force, less than one-half of what it has been in their power to earn has passed into the regimental exchequer. These are the paper battalions and corps—some of them six, seven, eight hundred, and a thousand strong, and which have placed in the field for review or inspection about one-fourth of their strength. Clothing and accoutrements have been supplied to the entire body, and drill-shed and shooting accommodation has been provided for them at a considerable expense for years, until at last the commanding officers have found themselves in a state of regimental bankruptcy. Once a colonel always a colonel is the motto of some of these. To dismiss their worthless men, and be satisfied with small but efficient battalions, was an idea which never entered their wise noddles; the proper course to be adopted, said they, is to ask Mr. Cardwell for more money to keep us in our commissions. Mr. Cardwell accordingly was "interviewed," but he told his auditors bluntly that it was in their power to earn considerably more money than they were doing; and he advised them to do so. To encourage the force, however, and at the same time increase its efficiency, certain regulations were made by which officers and sergeants could earn an additional fifty shillings each, all that was required of them being that they should pass an examination in certain branches of drill. To the sergeants generally this was acceptable, but the officers immediately discovered one hundred and one reasons why the thing was impracticable, and another hundred and one reasons why it was unnecessary, but Mr. Cardwell was adamant; earn the money, said he, and you shall have it. Schools of instruction for officers were established in November, and a few adventurous gentlemen attended them, returning home alive, much to the astonishment of their commissioned brethren. Other classes were formed, and more officers attended, learning for the first time that there was an attraction in drill, and that military movements had a meaning in them.

For the present year, these Schools of Instruction close to-day, and officers and sergeants who have passed the required examinations and qualified will in future be distinguished from their brethren who are remarkable for their inefficiency. Our local volunteers have been hard at work for four months, drilling and studying with an earnestness of purpose which shows that they are determined to maintain the high efficiency for which they are noted. The first officer to pass his examination was Lieutenant Colonel Egerton who obtained his certificate in January. In each of the three regiments the examination of the sergeants commenced as far back as January. The officers, having more to learn, have only

"gone through the mill" within the past few days. Gallant majors have been seen trotting round the Salford barracks square, rifle in hand, enjoying the fun; captains have been initiated into the mysteries of the manual and firing exercises and the goose step; lieutenants and ensigns have been made to act as covering sergeants, and drill, drill, drill, has been the order, day and night, for weeks past. That it has had a beneficial effect there can be no doubt. A life and energy has been thrown into the company and battalion musters which contrasts strongly with the previous listlessness and inactivity, and an honourable and efficient future (very different to the past), may be predicted for the rifle and artillery battalions of Manchester.

A GOSSIP ABOUT GREYHOUNDS AND COURSING.

THE great fuss made about the "wonderful" and "unprecedented" performances of that undoubtedly good greyhound, Master McGrath, is calculated to induce the unitiated to suppose that we have had nothing like him for speed in this country before. That this is true, however, we do not believe. The excellence of Master McGrath is made up—to use a billiard player's phrase—of "all-round" abilities; his speed, endurance, quickness of turning, dash, and grip are all above the average, and he has been a lucky dog.

In doing "justice to Ireland," however, we must not forget to deal out a little of the same commodity to our forefathers. This will be best accomplished, perhaps, by giving a few instances of what they did with *their* dogs. It must be borne in mind that at Waterloo, the scene of Master McGrath's victories, the courses are generally short ones. Hares seem to show to more advantage in the down countries, where the ground is undulating. The most famous coursing clubs of the last century were those of Norfolk, Essex, Berkshire, and the Flixton Wolds, of Yorkshire; and the most successful coursers were Lord Orford, the Marquis of Townsend, Colonel Thornton, of Thornville Royal, Major Topham, of the Wolds, and the Reverend H. Bate Dudley, of the Bradwell and Tillingham Club in Essex. These gentlemen are said to have "excelled every competitor," and they claimed to have improved the breed of greyhounds to "the highest possible state of perfection."

The speed of the horse, running upon a measured course, can be accurately ascertained. It is a difficult matter, however, with greyhounds, as the hare depends as much upon its turning and obliquity of running, as its speed. In February, 1800, a hare was started before a brace of greyhounds in Lincolnshire, and upon the distance being measured from her form to where she was killed it was found to be upwards of four miles in a direct line. There were many turns during the course increasing the length considerably, the ground was run over in twelve minutes; and the hare fell dead before the greyhounds touched her. It was formerly the practice in coursing for the horsemen to follow as they do foxhounds in the present day. A run took place about three-quarters of a century ago, which was long talked of amongst sportsmen. A hare started near to Bottisham in Cambridgeshire, took away for Six Mile Bottom, and although two-and-twenty horses went off with the greyhounds, only one could make a gallop at the conclusion of the course. The hare, as in the previous instance, dropped before the dogs within fifty yards of the covert which would in all probability have saved the poor creature's life.

A celebrated bitch called Czarina, bred by Lord Orford, and purchased at his sale by Colonel Thornton, won forty-seven matches in Norfolk, Wiltshire, and Yorkshire, and never was beat. Snowball, one of this bitch's first litter of eight whelps, was said to be the surest dog to "kill and take up" that ever ran. He won four cups, couples, and upwards of thirty matches, one of which was so severe that his opponent died immediately after the course. But the most celebrated dog of those days was The Miller. He was so large, awkward and clumsy, when a puppy, that he was near being thrown aside. A friend of his owner, having borrowed him at twelve months old, found that he could beat everything he was put against. He then commenced a brilliant career, which he maintained for seven seasons (seven seasons! "think of that Master" McGrath), winning seventy-four successive matches, without having been beaten.

A variety of singular occurrences are recorded of the invincible ardour and velocity, as well as persevering fortitude, of greyhounds. In 1792, as Lord Egremont's gamekeeper was leading a brace of greyhounds coupled together, a hare accidentally crossing the road, the dogs instantly broke from their conductor and gave chase, fastened as they were to each other; the pursuit afforded an uncommon and no less entertaining sight to several spectators. When the hare turned she had a manifest advantage, and embarrassed the dogs exceedingly, notwithstanding which they at length killed her at Pikeless Gate, after a course of between three and four miles. We have seen several courses where the dogs have broken away in couples, but seldom with the like result. In December, 1794, a company of gentlemen were coursing at Finchingfield, in Essex, when a hare was started, and a brace of greyhounds, starting from two different points, ran against each other with so much violence that they both died on the spot. A famous dog of the Rev. Mr. Corsellis, who chanced to be windbound at Dover, coursed a hare, who had a variety of pursuers in that neighbourhood, when the dog proved so superior to her in speed, and pressed her so close, that she ran immediately for the cliff, as her only chance of escaping, but the greyhound caught her at the brink, going over with her in his mouth to the bottom of the precipice, where they were literally dashed to pieces. In 1797, a brace of greyhounds coursed a hare over the edge of a chalk pit, at Offham, in Sussex, and both hare and dogs were found dead at the bottom.

Hares are wonderfully cunning beasts; their tricks and dodges to save their life are amazing.

> She doubles to mislead the hound;
> And measures back her mazy round.

We will onclude by relating an instance which we witnessed in 1832. A ng hare was started on Windmer Hill, at Ashtead, in Surrey. She made almost in a straight line for the chalk pit on the Leatherhead Road, with the dogs pretty near her scut. The chalk pit is protected on the field side, where there is a precipice of sixty or seventy feet, by posts and rails. Between the rails and the precipice there is a margin of about six feet. When the hare reached this place she twisted round at right angles and ran round the head of the pit, whilst both dogs took a flying leap over the rails into the pit, and were killed.

THE REV. ALEXANDER THOMSON ON SERMONS.

THE Rev. Alexander Thomson, in the beginning of an excellent sermon preached by him to his congregation the other Sunday morning, remarked that literary men were disposed to regard sermons as useless inflictions, and would not be sorry to see pulpit-preaching entirely abolished. Before proceeding to defend sermons, the reverend gentleman admitted that many of those exercises were far from being what they ought to be. For so widely-respected a minister as Mr. Thomson to have dwelt upon this part of his subject would perhaps have appeared somewhat indelicate; other ministers might have objected to a reverend brother taking upon himself the task of exposing the shortcomings of the fraternity. But it is in this admission that the gist of the matter lies; and as we were brought into court by Mr. Thomson at the outset of his discourse, and are free from the restrictions which fettered him—what might have been question able taste on his part being perfectly legitimate criticism on ours—we may be permitted to supplement his remarks with a few ideas of our own.

It does not appear to be generally understood that want of respect for modern sermons does not necessarily imply irreligion, or even unwillingness to attend a place of worship. Parson worship is not Christ or God worship. It seems strange that one should ever find it necessary to remind people of this fact; but so it is. There are plenty of regular pew-occupiers who grow impatient during the performance of what may be termed, so far as they are concerned, "the preliminaries," waiting for the time when the stage shall be cleared for the real object of interest, the occupant of the pulpit, to play his solitary part. On the other

hand there are many men beside men of letters—people simply of sincerity, education, and intelligence—who experience pleasurable emotions while participating in the earlier part of religious services, but who are frequently wearied by the oratorical displays which follow. Of the members of the former class little need here be said. Noisy, flowery, grandiloquent, bombastic sermons are the religious puff-paste on which they support their church-going natures. One would imagine that they were all tympanum. Education and true religion can alone enlighten them. But there are several potent causes at work which induce the devoutly-disposed men of the latter class to regard the large majority of modern sermons as mere twaddle, and a multitude of modern parsons as little else than encumbrances.

From the earliest period in the history of the Christian churches, when priests began to forget the simplicity and unselfishness of their calling, men of letters have been liable to the vituperation of the successors of the apostles. We have always had a half suspicion that even Voltaire's character has been handed down to us painted in colours rather darker than its natural tints, mainly because of the prejudices created by his unvarnished denunciations of the authors of the great St. Bartholomew event. Mr. Thomson is one of the exceptions to the rule. He courteously spoke of writers for literary journals as persons who could appreciate able sermons. We believe we shall rightly embrace the scope of his meaning if we drop the term "men of letters" and include in the class of sermon-haters all those people to whom we have just referred, who, from habits of reading, observation, and thought, are disposed to be critical and impartial. Such a class of men will find no use in sermons unless they see the possibility of somebody being benefited, or, to employ a more clerical word, "edified" by them; and before they can themselves be edified they require certain qualifications on the part of the edifier. The complaint of the day just is, that the majority of parsons are simply not fit to edify anybody. Our candid opinion is that large numbers have mistaken their vocation. Mr. Thomson is himself scholarly; he has his prejudices, but they are capable of an intelligible explanation; and he preaches to the point. But not of many preachers can even this much be said. The clergy—we use the term regardless of any denominational signification—in liberality of sentiment, in charity of thought, in consistency of action, in appreciation of truth, in humbleness of mind, in brain power, and in clear insight into things human and divine, is behind the intelligence of the laity. If its sermons are to be effective in the fullest sense, ought it not to lead the way?

There is a great deal of unnecessary nonsense talked about the non-intellectuality of religion, and much argument whether the latter is a matter pertaining to the head or the heart. We think it pertains to both. The dispute, however, has little to do with the question of clerical ability. To us it is quite clear that before we can learn from any professed teacher, we must have confidence in him. The office of a preacher is that of a guide in the highest yearnings of the human spirit, and in the most wayward impulses of the human heart. If his position has any meaning in it at all, it is the most responsible and sublime position that a man can fill. We cannot expect every parson to have genius. The gifts by which a man can sway the emotions of his hearers at will, such gifts as enabled Savonarola and Knox, Wesley, Keble, and Chalmers to awaken thousands from the lethargy of indifference to new ways of life and thought, are given to a few only. But if a man is to be allowed the position of teacher at all, one reasonably expects from him something like superior intelligence and accuracy of knowledge, education of taste, and refinement of language, aptness of illustration, and freedom from silliness, combined with a clear understanding of the message he has to deliver, and with the unpretending dignity of thoughtfulness. It is quite true that one may learn from the most stupid and illiterate of men. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings cometh wisdom," we know. But such wisdom is not delivered in the shape of sermons. One may forgive the blunders of a well-meaning man; one may listen with good-natured patience to the tedious platitudes of an individual who has his day's work to go through, and is, perhaps, as eager to get to the end of it as is his hearers to hear him do so. One may even bear with meekness the "mutual improvement" sentences, and the elaborate ornamentations of the aspirant for pulpit fame; but we doubt whether we should receive as much mental and moral good from such exercises as if we had remained at home reading a volume of Jeremy Taylor, or the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Mr. Thomson's defence of sermons rested mainly on the argument that a pulpit address may be free from novelty as far as the truths propounded in it are concerned, and embody advice and exhortation which has been uttered and listened to a hundred times before, and yet not be devoid of usefulness. With this opinion we cordially agree. It is unfortunately too true that professedly religious people need frequently to be reminded of the path of duty. Frail humanity is only too prone to hide away even from self-scrutiny its favourite vices. No thinking man can doubt that it is quite as much the duty of the true pastor, the faithful shepherd, to keep watch over the flock already in his charge, as to seek to gather into the fold the black sheep who are wandering beyond the pale. When the life of the teacher exemplifies his teaching, perhaps the best of sermons and the most productive of permanent good to society are those given in the still small voice of expostulation and reminder. The words of a good man have an eloquence all their own which no other eloquence can approach. But what is to be said when our experience tells us that as a class the lives of preachers do not exemplify their preaching. We can easily understand that an earnest manly-minded minister will find it difficult to understand how his fellows can be engaged in the same profession as he himself is, with motives less pure and lives less consistent, and we anticipate some animadversion for our expression of opinion on this point. We heartily wish we could be convinced of mistake. It is not pleasant to lose faith in men. But public opinion is too decided and common experience too conclusive to leave much room for hope. As a class parsons are proverbially the most pompous and assuming of mankind. No other race of men claim such privileges, can swallow so much personal adulation, are more jealous of their comforts and of each other, and as a rule do so little. We allude to home preachers only: we are not talking of missionaries. If Mr. Thomson regards his own experiences he will not be unmindful of instances of gross rudeness, upstart impertinence, repulsive conceit, and religious chicanery on the part of his clerical brethren. Human nature refuses to be liberal at the bidding of men who are themselves avaricious. The true apostle may well silence the folly of the scoffing Jew, and arouse the respect of the indifferent Roman; but it is waste of time to listen to the feeble comments on the vanities of this world and the claims of the poor and afflicted from men who are themselves eager in the pursuit of pleasures and ambition, and finish their duty to the destitue when they have bid others care for them.

There is no more idle or effeminate fallacy than that contained in the plea with which the censors of the priesthood are frequently met, that parsons are but men after all. It is true, but they should be the noblest of men. They are paid and set apart for the performance of the work whose fruit is demanded at their hands, and they should be equal to the dignity of their high calling. Nobody objects to the reasonableness of the opinion that the physician to whom we entrust the care of our bodies should be a qualified and able man. We are allowed to be unmerciful with quacks in that profession. Even if we call in a chimney-sweep to remove the accumulation which threatens to spoil the beauty of the domestic hearth, or a laundress to restore the pristine whiteness of our linen, we expect that both will know their work, and do it well. Surely we have a right to demand from the men to whom is entrusted the highest welfare of the human race and the most sacred duties of human society, the power and the will to be foremost in good works and of unsullied reputation. One thing, at least, is certain, that if these demands were answered sermons would increase in interest and utility.

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